

## Better Off Gone

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## Summary

Denji has a conversation while he eats dinner.

Denji grabs some of the last meat from the fridge, letting out a sigh of relief. He loves meat. It's probably one of his favorite foods since he never really got to enjoy it as a kid. But having so much of it... and knowing where it came from. If he ate any more meat after this he might throw up. He grabs the dish from the fridge and puts it in the microwave, quietly standing in front of it while it lets out a low hum. He remembers the first time he used the microwave. Aki had made something for dinner the night prior, and had expected Denji to know how to use the microwave. But the dish was wrapped with tin foil and... well... it was a mess after. He starts to think about Aki more. The food he would make. Him with his back turned while he'd be making dinner for Denji and Power. He... missed the smell of Aki's cooking. No matter how hard he tried, he was never able to make his cooking taste the same as Aki's. He misses the taste of Aki's food... Getting to eat with him and Power... Oh yeah, he misses Power too... He rubs his neck, feeling the light bruising from when she'd drink his blood when he was asleep. Then, he puts his hand under his shirt, gently fiddling with the starter cord. Does he miss Ms. Makima too...? Why does he miss her...? Isn't she a bad person? What if he-

He's snapped out of his thoughts by the beeping of the microwave. He sighs, taking the food out and sitting down. He fiddles with the food with his fork for a little while, before taking a bite. It tastes pretty good actually. Not as good as some other stuff he's had before, but it's decent enough. He takes a few more bites. "Hey, Ms. Makima... Sorry that I killed you. I dunno if I ever said sorry for that. But, I dunno... Not quite sure if I should be saying sorry or not, but my mind's still all jumbled up from what you did to me." He takes a sip of his water. "Y'know, Ms. Makima... I've been questioning if I made the right call by taking you out... I mean... I didn't want to die or anything, but you could've made everyone really happy. I mean, if anyone could make a world where everybody's happy, it'd be you. But... I guess I've been thinking a lot lately, about what made me happy..." He fiddles with his food, twiddling the fork in his hand. "I've been thinking about those movies we went and saw... God, feels like forever ago now..." He looks out the window, seeing the rain.

He thinks back to when him and Reze met. How it was a rainy day, and he had been so sure that he was in love with Makima, that she'd be the one he spends forever with. But then, his entire world got turned upside down when he met Reze. "Those first couple movies we saw weren't all that..." He thinks to when him and Reze kissed, or Himeno's barf kiss, or all the other times his dreams were crushed. Every time his life got crushed over and over again. When he killed his dad. When Pochita died. When Himeno died. When Aki died. When Power died. Even when Ms. Makima died. Life had taken everything from him over, and over, and over again.

"But..."

"If I never saw all those crappy movies beforehand... I don't think the last one would've been as good... It's not that the quality of the movie was better or anything... But... getting to see all of those crummy movies first made that last one feel that much more special. Not... quite sure why... Maybe that's what life's like too." He takes another bite of the food, savoring the taste as he thinks about all the good things that felt that much more tasty thanks to the bad tastes he's experienced. When Power first started sleeping in his bed. Snuggling with Meowy when

Power had her blood drawn. Sharing the bed with Aki and Power when Power had nightmares. Or when Aki first cooked for the three of them, and he made extra food for everyone. Those dates he went on with Reze... "Maybe life would've been better if I let you kill me... But... then every movie that people saw would've been like that tenth movie... It wouldn't be as special as it was when we saw it." He continues eating. "And y'know... maybe life won't be that bad from here on out... Like you said, maybe one day I could find a wife, or have kids, or friends... There'll be a lot more crappy movies in my life from here on... But... maybe there'll be just as many amazing ones too." He finishes the meal, patting his belly. "And y'know, Ms. Makima if the whole reincarnation thing for devils is real... I hope in your next life you see those amazing movies... Maybe if you had more movies like that in your life, you would've turned out happier."

He picks up his bowl, setting it in the sink. "And who knows... maybe I'll get to watch those movies with you."

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Denji walks into the apartment, taking off his school uniform's jacket and tossing it to the side. He notices Nayuta sitting on the couch with a movie on. "Home." He calls out, but Nayuta doesn't answer. She's been quiet ever since she first moved in, but she'd always at least look over at him when he says he's home. He sits down next to her on the couch, before noticing that there's tears in her eyes. "H- Hey, what's wrong?" He holds her shoulder. "You ok?" He glances over to the TV, noticing something. A movie's on, 'Ballad of a Soldier.' He smiles a little. "Cool if I watch it with you?" He asks, tilting his head to Nayuta. She glances up at him, wiping her eyes as she nods. "Sweet." Denji says. "Y'know, I watched this movie with a friend one time." Nayuta seemed interested, looking up at him. "Really...?" She says quietly.

"Yeah... Changed my life."

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